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Scribe, Augustin Eugène

THE SCHOLAR:

A COMEDY,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

JOHN BALDWIN BUCKSTONE.

PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

LONDON:

WILLIAM STRANGE, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1835.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The Scholar is an adaptation of Scribe's "*Le Savant*." A critic in a Sunday paper, in his notice of the *Scholar*, was in extacies at the "fine eulogium" on our "immortal bard." "A noble frankness," as he said, "on the part of the French Author." In Monsieur Scribe's Drama, there is no such eulogium to be found; and several other points, that Messieurs, the critics, declared themselves to be pleased with, do not belong to the French play. This statement is made that the reader may not suppose the present drama to be a literal translation.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Erasmus Bookwurm, the Scholar</i>	-	-	Mr. W. FARREN.
<i>Hans Krackjaw, his Man</i>	-	-	Mr. BUCKSTONE.
<i>Mr. Wurtzburg</i>	-	-	Mr. STRICKLAND.
<i>Doctor Keppelcranck</i>	-	-	Mr. WEBSTER.
<i>Frederick</i>	-	-	Mr. BRINDAL.
<i>Mrs. Wurtzburg</i>	-	-	Mrs. W. CLIFFORD.
<i>Helen</i>	-	-	Miss TAYLOR.

This Comedy was first produced in July, 1835.

COSTUME.

Erasmus—*First Dress*—Dark cotton morning gown, white waistcoat, dark trousers, with wellington boots pulled over the trouser, the collar of the shirt turned down and tied with a black ribband, brown chesnut wig, with full curls parted on the forehead, after the fashion of the German students.

Second Dress—A long dark hrown coat bound with black velvet, large pockets at the side, pumps, and a travelling cap.

Hans—Drab coat and waistcoat, black silk pantaloons, white stockings, and shoes, white cravat, light wig, combed formally and tied in a tail.

Mr. Wurtzburg—Light brown body coat, white waistcoat, pepper and salt pantaloons, and hessian boots, powdered wig.

Doctor Keppelcranck—Large black coat, white waistcoat, black pantaloons, and hessian boots.

Frederick—Austrian officers uniform.

Mrs. Wurtzburg—Pink satin dress and white satin turban.

Helen—White muslin frock trimmed with lace.

THE SCHOLAR.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A Library—Two tables, loaded with books and papers—a writing-desk on a table, in the centre of the stage, on which lies a manuscript—Maps are displayed against the walls—Busts of Goethe, Milton, and Shakespeare are seen—Several chairs—A door at the back—a door on the L. H. S. E.—At the rising of the curtain, a drum is heard in the street—HANS KRACKJAW heard without—

Hans. Pray go away before my master's return. (*The drum ceases.*) If you come here beating that drum, as you do, we must complain to the police.

Enter HANS, L. H. D.

Never heard such a noise in all my life. Master pays those street-musicians, on purpose to get rid of them, and now they come every day. I've given them nothing this morning; however, they have gone away now, and I can begin to think what I ought to do. Master told me to put his study a little in order, but I'm quite afraid to touch any thing. If I put a book out of its place, I do wrong; if I disturb any of the sheets of paper that are lying about, I do wrong; then how is it possible to put the room in order, if one must not touch a single thing in it? The best way will be, to let it remain just as it is—'twill be an inch thick in dust soon, but I can't help that. I did clean the busts yesterday; and when master saw what I had done, how vexed he was, to be sure—told me I had

destroyed the fine natural shadowing bestowed by the hand of chance, and he would not have had a grain of that exquisite dust removed for any money. Exquisite dust! Oh! oh! oh! —we scholars have strange fancies. (*A knock heard, L. H. D.*) Come in.

HELEN enters.

Helen. Good morning, Hans. Is your master within?

Hans. No, miss.

Helen. Is he better this morning?

Hans. Yes, miss, thanks to your care of him. He has gone out for a walk.

Helen. And has, no doubt, forgotten me—that is, he has forgotten its Thursday, the day that I always take my Latin lesson. Good morning, Hans. Tell him I am very, very happy to hear that he is so much better, though it is not polite to forget his pupil.

Hans. Stay, miss—pray don't go—if he knows that you called, and wouldn't stay till he came home, he will be so cross.

Helen. Then he is sometimes cross.

Hans. Only sometimes—when I disarrange his papers, or clean his busts—any thing else he never notices: he is always contemplating, and immersed in study, so never observes my little eccentric orbits.

Helen. What extraordinary words you make use of, Hans?

Hans. Yes, miss—my master being a scholar, of course his domestic ought to partake of a little of his learning—when he's reading, I sometimes peep over his shoulder, and get hold of a hard word or two, to help me when I talk to ladies—thus, you see, while I merely skim the surface of the ocean of literature, I leave it to my master to dive into its unfathomable depths, and to bring up the pearls and jewels that lie embedded in its bottom.

Helen. Where did you first meet with your master?

Hans. When I was deputy-beadle of the cathedral of Cologne. I did hope, when the beadle died, to have succeeded him; but I saw no hope of ever emerging from the deputyship; and, to a man of mind, an occupation where one can see at a glance how high one can soar, and even the highest of that height being but a low position, comparatively speaking, one's apt to turn one's back upon such a pursuit, and take to another where the summit of the ladder is in the clouds.

Helen. Very true, Hans.

Hans. So, when I gave up my deputyship, I was walking along the streets, thinking of what I should do, when I saw a gentleman reading—a runaway horse knocked him down—I flew to his assistance—he was not hurt—and, by my picking up his book before I helped him, attracted his attention. He asked what I was—I told him: he said if I should like to live in the service of a scholar, he could offer me a home—so I wiped the mud from his book and his coat, put his hat into shape, followed him to this house—into this room—and here have I been ever since.

Helen. And you like your place?

Hans. I do—it suits my notions. Master may one day become famous—and the valet shares in the glory of his master.

Helen. (*sitting in a large chair at the centre table.*) I dare say, Hans, that your master often sits here, thinking this quiet study Paradise itself.

Hans. Not much like that, I should think, miss. This is a close, dusty room—that, as I have read, is a lovely spot.

Helen. Ha, my dear Hans, where one is happy, that is Paradise.

Hans. What a nice, what an angelic creature you are—I've been thinking if my master was ever to marry, you would be the identical—

Helen. Your master will never marry.

Hans. Why not—he's not so old—scarcely forty—and a

man's in his prime at that age—to be sure, study and want of exercise makes him look older than he is; but, Lord bless me, when I'm forty, I shall think myself just emerging into life, approaching my high time of discretion, and perfect vigour of existence.

Helen. He's writing a book, containing arguments against matrimony—

Hans. We often preach what we don't practise.

Helen. He's a good kind soul.

Hans. That he is—loves every body except the coppersmiths—the trunk-makers—the coffin-maker—the blacksmith—the saw-grinder—and the drums—those send him out of his mind—(*MUSIC.—Drum heard again without*)—Ha! there they are again.

ERASMUS heard without.

Eras. Hans, shut the door, Hans—drive them away.

Enter ERASMUS BOOKWURM, L. H. D. *in haste*,—*a book in his hand, and dressed in a very slovenly manner*—the drum ceases.

Eras. Give them a shilling, and tell them to go.

Hans. Lord, sir; you give them so much money they think you like it.

Eras. Tell them I don't, and that I give it them to go away.

Hans. Then they'll come every hour.

Eras. Stop them, at any rate—or I shall go distracted.—(*HANS runs out L. H. D.*)—Provoking, while spell-bound in the perusal of this fine old book—to be thus disturbed. What a splendid edition—black-letter—the date 1560—how delightfully the leaves are mildewed by time; and its type, how magnificent! there are worm holes through every letter.—(*He regards the book with tenderness.*)

Helen. (*Approaching him.*)—Sir!

Eras. Fine type ; I defy the whole university to decypher a single word.—(*He puts down the book with great care, and sits in a chair in the centre of the stage.*)

Helen. My dear master.

Eras. Ha ! my pupil, to whom I owe so much.

Helen. Nay, sir—I am *your* debtor.

Eras. For what, dear ?

Helen. Do you not teach me French, and Latin, and Italian ?

Eras. And when hours of anxious study threw me upon a bed of sickness, did not your kind attentions restore me to health ? the first day that I came down to my study, I was in this chair—Hans had gone out—my physician had not arrived—not a soul was near me, and I fainted ; on recovering I beheld, as I thought, an angel by my side, anxiously attending me, bathing my brows, and asking me with the sweetest voice in the world, if I was better—'twas you, Helen. I thought I was no more, and was transported to the skies.

Helen. You were not.

Eras. But one of their bright inhabitants had descended to me.

Helen. Yes—I sent for the doctor immediately.

Eras. Ah ! poor Keppelcrank, he was here, too ; a good man that—an old friend of mine—you sigh, my dear.

Helen. I am so afraid that my calls upon you must distract your thoughts, and interrupt you, and I often think that the time you devote in teaching me, might be better employed on your great work.

Eras. Nay, I delight in the task ; I find relaxation—enjoyment—a pleasure in it—it restores the tone of my thoughts, like Goethe or Klopstock's fine poetry, and I feel better.

Helen. Ah ! then I'll call every day—when I return from the country.

Eras. Are you going into the country ?

Helen. This afternoon.

Eras. What! go into the country—neglect your studies?

Helen. 'Tis a yearly visit to a rich uncle and aunt—and one that I have made from childhood.

Eras. My dear girl, you should not neglect your studies for rich uncles and aunts. 'Tis better to possess a cultivated mind, than be heiress to the Indies.

Helen. Very true; but my mother's notions are very different, she cares little for study, and much for money; but that is very pardonable, as all her property consists in this house in which you lodge; and my uncle and aunt, having no children, have promised to provide for me, and I am now going to visit them for three months.

Eras. Three months! you'll lose all that you have acquired—your terminations, your verbs; you'll never know how to conjugate.

Helen. I think I shall know better than ever—for I am going to be married.

Eras. To be married! my dear girl, my child. Do you know that the great work I am now employed upon is a treatise on the evils of matrimony; it is to form eight volumes. I have not yet completed the first—I will lend you what I have done to read; you shall have it in manuscript, in the hope that even the perusal of its early chapters, may turn your thoughts from that fatal act. Matrimony! ugh! I tremble at the word.

Helen. 'Tis the wish of my uncle and aunt.

Eras. Do you love your intended?

Helen. I have never seen him.

Eras. Worse and worse. Here, child, here, you must take this manuscript with you—read it carefully---write marginal remarks, that I may answer them.

Helen. I will; and now may I ask you one question without offending?

Eras. 'Tis not in your power to offend *me*, my child.

Helen. Are you rich?

Eras. I really don't know ; upon my word, I never trouble myself on money matters---my friends relieve me of that care.

Helen. Because, as some little return for the trouble you have bestowed upon me, I *did* intend to ask my uncle's interest in obtaining you a rectory. I think your habits —

Eras. No! no! no! my dear girl, do not trouble your uncle on my account ; I shall neither leave this house nor the habits I have contracted in it. I want no other employ than that I now possess ; my books—my manuscripts, are my existence —my life : and all that can distract me from them would be a calamity. Here will I live and die—pen in hand—amidst my works, like an armed warrior on the battle field—a death not so glorious, perhaps, but far more useful.

Helen. Do not talk of dying.

Eras, Not while you continue my companion, pupil, friend. I have written a chapter on platonic affections—I wish you to read it—I thought of you in every line I wrote, and I felt inspired. I think you will say it is written eloquently—perhaps equal to some things in Cicero's *De Amicitia*. By the bye, you shall take my Cicero with you—I have marked a passage to read to you—where is it? where is my Cicero? (*looking among his books*), where can that careless Hans have put it? I think it is in my bed-room—yes, I was reading there last night —wait, wait—I'll get it you—(*He runs into the room at back*).

Helen. His Cicero ! I usually see it on his table here (*looking amongst the books, her eyes rest upon the manuscript that Erasmus had opened*)—this is the manuscript that he is going to lend me. What is this? (*reading*) “The thirty-first inconvenience of a marriage state.” Thirty-one inconveniences! I never could have dreamt of there being half so many; (*reading*) “Twentieth argument against matrimony.” If there are twenty arguments against it in the first volume, how many will the

whole work contain? I'm quite alarmed. (*A knock at the door.*) Come in.

Enter DOCTOR KEPPELCRANCK.

Doctor. Ha, Miss Helen, still an attentive pupil—still anxious to improve, eh? I wonder you are not weary of study.

Helen. I find too much pleasure in my tasks, ever to feel weary; and when Mr. Erasmus relieves them, by reading Klopstock, Goethe, and Shakespeare, I think I could listen to him for ever.

Doctor. Hem! indeed! where is Mr. Bookwurm?

Helen. Looking for his Cicero.

Doctor. Indeed! so he leaves a young and pretty girl for Cicero! a greater proof of his learning than gallantry.

Helen. Adieu, Doctor, (*Crosses to L. H.*) Now you have called, I shall not remain here—I may be in the way.

Doctor. Nay, nay; you need not go on my account. Your society always cheers him—he has said so a hundred times.

Helen. He prefers yours, Doctor.

Doc. No, no; when I have felt his pulse, and written his prescription, there is an end to all his interest in my company.

Helen. I must leave you for a few moments—I am preparing for a visit to the country. Tell my kind friend that I shall contrive to see him before I go, and take his manuscript with me. Adieu, Doctor, adieu. (*Exit HELEN, L. H. D.*)

Doctor. Nice little girl. If I were a single man, she should be the first that I should pop to—

ERASMUS re-appears from the back, reading.

Eras. “—*Solem e mundo tollere videntur.*” Ah, ah! beautiful! beautiful! “To deprive life of friendship, is to take the sun from the world.” What fine Latinity—how pure—how beautiful. “*Solem e mundo—*” Oh beautiful, beautiful.

[*The Doctor, without speaking to ERASMUS, takes him by the hand in which he holds the book, and feels his pulse.*

ERASMUS, without observing the Doctor, takes the book into his other hand.

Doctor. Villainous! villainous!

Eras. (*Turning round with indignation*) What's villainous? Cicero—the divine Cicero—villainous!

Doctor. No, no—your pulse.

Eras. Ah, doctor, is it you?

Doctor. Yes, and fortunate for you that it is.

Eras. What's the matter?

Doctor. You are in a high state of fever; and, if you do not attend to me, you'll die—you'll destroy yourself and me also.

Eras. You!

Doctor. You'll destroy my reputation, and that is a doctor's existence. I attend you—you die—the world of course will say I killed you, when the true assassin will be your habits—your sedentary pursuits. You shall leave this house—I've said it—I've told the landlady to put a bill to let the rooms; and to-day, whether you like it or not, you shall obey my orders; you must take air—exercise—you must have excitement.

Eras. Doctor—

Doctor. Silence—I am your old friend—your family's old friend—I have physicked them all, and buried them half—you are the only one left.

Eras. True.

Doctor. The death of your last brother gives you the title of Count Mullendorf; you must quit your studies and enter the world. The family estate is now your own, and the once retired and learned Erasmus Bookwurm must become a gay nobleman—a man of pleasure.

Eras. Renounce my books—my habits—do violence to my disposition—abjure my sweet companions—my thoughts—to be what? a glittering fool. I shan't.

Doctor. You'll turn miser, I suppose.

Eras. No, I'll spend my money in books—I'll give prizes to the universities—I'll discover starving talent, encourage it, foster it—the artist shall look upon me as a friend, the scholar as a brother, and the world as a benefactor.

Doctor. Bravo! a very good beginning.

Eras. Have you sent to Daniel Stop?

Doctor. The ten thousand florins?

Eras. Yes.

Doctor. I have.

Eras. Dear old fellow, he was my first Latin master—he taught me to decline *musa*, the muse. Wasn't he surprised to hear from me?

Doctor. No.

Eras. No!

Doctor. He was dead.

Eras. Dead!—Poor old Stop—how he used to thump me, bless his old fist.

Doctor. He has left a son unprovided for.

Eras. You should have given him the money.

Doctor. I have.

Eras. That's right. (*He sits at the desk, and eagerly peruses his manuscript.*)

Doctor. There! you are at that murderous study again. You'll die.

Eras. I wo'nt.

Doctor. You will. I now give you over—only one course can save you—you must buy a large house—receive company—give balls

Eras. Balls! I give balls!

Doctor. You must dance.

(*Doctor capers.*)

Eras. Do you wish me to bow and grin, and jump in the air like a fool? Doctor, did you ever thrust your fingers in your ears when in a ball-room? Did you ever shut out the

sound of the music, and only look upon the dull forms of the dancers, hopping and popping about?—I have. Fools, doctor—all fools—lost time, doctor. If people are not to be misers with their money, they should be with their time—life is comprised of moments.

Doctor. True!

Eras. And I have none to spare, while my great work remains unfinished.

Doctor. How much have you written?

Eras. A few lines will finish the first volume—that will be done to-day.

Doctor. And the whole work.

Eras. Will be in eight.

Doctor. You will complete it in—

Eras. Two years.

Doctor. Then it will remain unfinished.

Eras. Eh!

Doctor. You'll die in one.

Eras. Die in one year! and my book—

Doctor. Must be left to the care of some other scholar to breathe his last over.

Eras. That must not be—it shall not be—I must live to complete my work. Doctor, pray contrive to let me live two years.

Doctor. Then rigidly adhere to my prescriptions.

Eras. Name them—name any thing—that may enable me to finish my eight volumes on the inconveniences of marriage, and I am your slave.

Doctor. Then, by Galen and Hippocrates, there is but one way to escape; but one loop-hole through which to creep from certain death.

Eras. Well, what is it?

Doctor. You must get married!

Eras. Married!

Doctor. Married.

Eras. Take a wife!

Doctor. Take a wife.

Eras. In the face of my great work—in opposition to my eight volumes—practically refute my own arguments—

Doctor. Consider, what a knowledge of matrimonial miseries you will acquire by being yourself a married man: besides, you will be regarded as having sacrificed your own happiness, in order to be able to prove your theory.

Eras. True!

Doctor. They will say, had he never married, he could not have described his inconveniences with such truth; and you will be looked upon—

Eras. As a martyr!—*Doctor,* you're right. The great painter of old stabbed a man in his studio that he might pourtray his dying agonies—I will surpass that painter—I will immolate myself, that I may truly describe my torments.

(Crosses to L.H.)

Doctor. Think of an ill-tempered wife.

Eras. Delicious!

Doctor. Screaming children.

Eras. Sublime!

Doctor. Hungry relatives.

Eras. Beautiful!

Doctor. Domestic broils.

Eras. Animating!

Doctor. And battles!

Eras. Exciting!

Doctor. Tears, reproaches, tyranny, and slavery!

Eras. Delightful!—I'll endure all for the sake of my fellow-creatures. (They embrace.)

Doctor. That's right—now your life is saved.

Eras. Doctor, I must be relieved from all the trouble of courtship—I never could whisper soft things in a woman's ear

in my life. You must undertake all the ogling, and sighing, and protesting: in short, the whole matter must be arranged for me up to the very moment of going to church—it's quite enough for me to be married.

Doctor. The first woman that I think suitable to you you will accept.

Eras. Yes.

(Crosses to L. H.)

Doctor. Adieu, my friend.—I'm now going to call on all my acquaintances to make my selection.

Eras. That's right—get me some horrid woman that will torment me every hour—'twill be a pity to sacrifice any poor young creature that may look for affection and attention, for that I cannot give—I've no time.

Doctor. If I bring you a wife in half an hour, you'll marry her.

Eras. Yes, I'll take her—I'll take her—as I would one of your prescriptions: the draught may be nauseous, but down it must go. Adieu. While you are absent, I will finish my first volume.

Doctor. Now for my voyage of discovery.

[*Exit Doctor, L. H. D.*

Eras. So—I'm to be married in an hour. Well, be it so. Don't you frown at me, my dear old friends (*Regarding his books*)—I shall never forsake you. When I am here, I am surrounded by the souls of living and departed genius—And can the society of a wife wean me from you?—Oh, no, no—I submit to the torment, as a holy monk endures his penance—that I may become worthy of admission to your high places—(*Knock.*)—Who's there?

Enter HANS, L. H. D.

Hans. A juvenile young person requests an audience.

Eras. I can't see him—I'm busy.

Hans. Not being aware of that circumstance, I permitted

him to follow me up stairs, and the consequence is—that he's here.

Enter FREDERICK, L. H. D.

Eras. Who's there?

Hans. This military young warrior.

Fred. Pray do not let me disturb you, sir—your servant misunderstood me—I did not wish to speak with you.

Hans. Oh, you've come to stare at my master—then you had better take a seat, and commence your ocular demonstration.

Fred. These apartments, I perceive, are to let—I merely wished to look at them.

Eras. To let!

Hans. Yes, sir—the Doctor ordered a notification to that effect to be displayed in the windows.

Fred. As I do not take the rooms furnished, of course you will remove your books—as I am no scholar, they will be of little service to me.

Eras. No scholar!—Poor young man.

Hans. (*aside.*) Ignoramus.

Fred. I know little of science—

Eras. Barbarian!

Hans. Gothic vandal.

(*Aside.*)

Fred. Though I had a father who was master of it. I, sir, am a soldier in the regiment of the Archduke Charles—about to be married to an heiress—and while the preliminaries are proceeding, I am anxious to remain in this house.

Eras. Well, sir—I am also going to be married, and I am anxious to remain in this house.

Fred. The rooms are to let, sir.

Eras. You must speak to the Doctor—I know nothing about it: all I can say is, that these rooms are mine—these books are mine—that servant is mine—and I do not intend to part with either. Now, go—I am occupied, and do not wish to be disturbed.

Hans. Now, sir, I am waiting to introduce you to the street-door of the domus.

Fred. I must speak to the lady of the house.

[*FREDERICK*, in turning to depart, knocks over a table of books—among them is a very large one—papers fall out of it—*ERASMUS* starts up.]

Eras. Goth! you have knocked down my Tacitus—my Tacitus, with all the annotations. (*He stoops to pick up the book.*) You should be more careful, sir.—Don't touch them.

Fred. I am very sorry, sir.

Enter DOCTOR KEPPELCRANCK L. H. D.

Doctor. It's done—it's settled—all is arranged.

Eras. All is disarranged—all my Roman Emperors knocked down by this clumsy German—my notes all out of order—'twill take me a month to put them right again.

Doctor. You will have plenty of leisure for that after your wedding.—(*ERASMUS crosses to L. H. and pick up books.*)

Hans. Wedding!

Doctor. Your master is going to be married immediately.

Hans. Master going to be united in wedlock, after all his arguments—impossible!

Doctor. (*To ERASMUS.*)—I have just parted with the uncle of the girl, my proposal in your behalf was immediately accepted, and he wishes to see you.

Eras. (*Arranging the loose papers in his book.*)—I must first put my Tacitus in order.

Doctor. Then be quick.

Eras. Sha'n't be longer than three weeks.

Doctor. You must leave it as it is. The family of your bride expect you to dinner to-day, at their country house.

Eras. I won't leave my first volume unfinished, and my annotations disarranged.

Doctor. Mr. Wurtzburg expects us at three.

Fred. Mr. Wurtzburg, the counsellor?

Doctor. The same, sir.

Fred. Is that gentleman going to marry one of his nieces?

Doctor. His niece, sir! he has but one.

Fred. He's going to marry Counsellor Wurtzburg's niece! Tell me, sir!

Doctor. (*To ERASMUS, who is writing.*)—Dress yourself, sir, you have no time to lose.

Eras. Sha'n't stir till I have finished the volume. Hans, I shall leave this manuscript on my desk, deliver it to my pupil.

Doctor. Hans, look out your master's best apparel,

Hans. Come with me, Doctor, and I will show you all that he has.

Doctor. Quick, my lad, quick.—(*The Doctor and HANS go off at the back.*)

Fred. I was impatient to be alone with you, sir.

Eras. And I am impatient to be quite alone, sir.

Fred. You are going to me married, I hear.

Eras. Yes, sir, at my Doctor's request.

Fred. To Mr. Wurtzburg's niece.

Eras. I do not know who I am to be married to—it's nothing to me—the doctor has settled all that.

Fred. I advise you, sir, to pause ere you rush into matrimony.

Eras. (*Starting up.*)—Eh! have you any arguments to advance against the state? sit down, my dear friend, and let me hear them—(*he thrusts FREDERICK into a chair, draws another and sits close by him*)—now state them, and I will take notes.

Fred. I have no arguments to advance—merely facts.

Eras. I like facts better—state them.

Fred. I myself, sir, love the lady to whom it appears you are about to be married; her aunt has given her consent to my addressing her; and believe me, sir, I shall not lose the object of my affections without a terrible struggle.

Eras. I've nothing at all to do with it, if you want to argue your right to the lady, you must talk to the Doctor.

Fred. I have every reason to believe, sir, that the lady is not indifferent to me.

Eras. So much the better—I shall gain an argument by my position.

Fred. (Rising)—There is my card—(*throwing a card on the table*)—and if you persist in your intentions, we must meet again.

Eras. With all my heart, sir.

Fred. I shall look in to-morrow, with a friend.

Eras. Very well, sir.

Fred. You may choose your own weapons.

Eras. Weapons!

Fred. We must fight.

Eras. We—no, no—you must fight the Doctor; I've nothing at all to do with it; the Doctor's your man—the hopes, fears, pains, and perils of courtship he has undertaken to bear. I have nothing to do with them—I am to be married by contract—fight the doctor.

Fred. I shall look in upon you to-morrow, sir.

[*Exit FREDERICK L. H. D.*

Eras. Hum! the troubles of matrimony are commencing even before I have tied the fatal knot. Another argument for a book—a fine one—'twill do for the end of the volume.—(*He walks about; HANS enters with clothes, hat, shoes, &c., he follows ERASMUS.*)—“If your wife has had a prior attachment, in all probability, she will cherish a lingering love for its object, which every little disagreement between you will but serve to increase; and almost every wife *has* had a prior affection. What man can safely say he was a woman's first love? Ergo, beware of marrying a woman who has had a prior engagement.” Ha! ha! this will end my first volume excellently, what thousands my book will save from misery.—

I shall be called the anti-matrimonial philanthropist—no man, after reading my book, will lay out his —— (*Turns and sees HANS.*)

Hans. Clothes, to be married in ——

Eras. Ha! true!

Enter the DOCTOR from the back.

Doctor. Come, come, my friend, not dressed yet, we shall be too late.

Eras. I have been detained by a young man—he's coming again to fight you—there's his card.— (*Giving the card to the DOCTOR.*)

Doctor. Frederick Stop!

Eras. What! surely he is not the son of my old master.

Doctor. No doubt of it—and has called to thank you for the ten thousand florins.

Eras. (*At his desk, writing.*)—No, no—he called to fight—you are to go out instead of me.

Doctor. Nonsense—dress, dress.

Eras. I will finish my first volume.

Doctor. Hans, dress your master.— (*ERASMUS continues writing; HANS goes behind him, and takes off his coat; ERASMUS rises in anger; the DOCTOR thrusts him back into the chair; ERASMUS places his manuscript on the back of HANS and writes rapidly; the DOCTOR ties on his cravat; ERASMUS writes in another position; HANS puts on his hat; the Doctor stoops to arrange ERASMUS' buckles; he writes on the DOCTOR's back, and in every position during their dressing him, in which his hand is at liberty.*)

Eras. Stop—don't—I've an idea—no man—should ever marry after certain age—excellent—I can't write fast enough for my flow of thought—I'm near the close—near the last word—I have it. Huzza! its done—my first volume is complete. Hans, put on my coat.— (*HANS puts on his coat.*)—Take

this to my pupil, Hans—tell her to read it during her visit in the country. Now, Doctor, I'm ready—(*going*)—stay, let me have one last look at my Tacitus.

Doctor. No, no.

Eras. I will look at my notes.

Doctor. We shall be too late.

Eras. Just one page.

Doctor. Come, come.—(*urging him.*)

Eras. I must—I will.—(*He hastily opens the Tacitus; the drums are again heard beating loudly in the streets.*)

Hans. The drums are come again.

Eras. (*Stopping his ears*)—Away then, away—to matrimony—to destruction—rather than hear that noise.—(*ERAS-MUS rushes out L. H. D.*)

Doctor. (*Following.*)—Huzza! Victory! [Exit L. H. D]

Hans. (*Flourishing the manuscript.*)—Master will be married at last, in spite of his book.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A Saloon in the Country-house of Mr. WURTZBURG.—Large book-case on the L. H. U. E.—Shelves, with books, R. H.—Folding-doors at the back, opening to a garden—A Table, on which are several books, in the centre—Tables, chairs, &c.—Pens and ink on table.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. WURTZBURG from back.

Wurtz. Madam, I will not consent.

Mrs. W. I never met with such an obstinate man—you delight in refusing the slightest favor.

Wurtz. I tell you plainly, and resolutely, that my niece shall not marry the young fellow that you have selected for her—that Mr. —— what's his name ?

Mrs. W. Frederick Stop—why should you object to him ? I'm sure he's a charming young man. An officer in the regiment of the Archduke Charles too—and one of the most dashing and sprightly youths that has lately come under my observation.

Wurtz. Sprightly!—Who ever heard of German sprightliness ! Though I am ignorant of what it may be composed, I have a perfect knowledge of its weight, for your Frederick Stop, in stopping with you the other night, thought proper to stop on my toes.

Mrs. W. You had no business near us when we were performing the Vienna galopade.

Wurtz. And what business had the wife of an Aulic counsellor to be dancing the galopade with a young lieutenant. Don't you know, madam, that such follies may disgrace me with the minister.

Mrs. W. Disgrace you!—If it were not for your wives, some of you politicians would make but sorry figures.

Wurtz. Don't be insolent, madam—I have come to a conclusion—Mr. Frederick Stop does not marry my niece.

Mrs. W. Besides his pay—already possesses ten thousand florins.

Wurtz. Pooh!—where did he get them?

Mrs. W. How should I know? He has them, and which his solicitor can testify.

Wurtz. The truth is, madam, I have already promised my niece to a man of title.

Mrs. W. Of title!

Wurtz. To the wealthy Count Mullendorf, who will take my niece without a stiver.

Mrs. W. Indeed. Then you intend to sacrifice the poor girl's happiness at the shrine of your parsimony.

Wurtz. No, no—I wish to promote the poor girl's happiness; and if I can accomplish it without any supplies being required on my part, you ought to be the last person to offer any objection. Besides, my being allied to a count of the empire will add to my consequence as counsellor—the minister will like it.

Mrs. W. The minister!

Wurtz. The count is also a scholar, madam—his erudition will also assist my views.

Mrs. W. Your views!

Wurtz. You know, madam, that I am a member of the Bibliographic Society of Vienna and Berlin, correspondent to the Paris Institute, and a diffuser of useful knowledge.

Mrs. W. A *confuser* of useful knowledge. You forget that the poor girl may love Captain Frederick, and you would marry her to an old man.

Wurtz. Not forty.

Mrs. W. A ridiculous man.

Wurtz. His income is one hundred thousand florins per annum.

Mrs. W. A miser.

Wurtz. Hold your tongue—here comes my niece.

Mrs. W. Abide by her decision.

Wurtz. Agreed.

Enter HELEN, R.H., a manuscript in her hand.

Mrs. W. Helen, my dear, come hither—bless me, how red the poor girl's eyes are—you have been weeping.

Helen. No, aunt—I have been reading.

Mrs. W. Some affecting book, I suppose.

Wurtz. Or the Minister's last speech on opening the Budget.

Helen. Neither—a manuscript that has been lent to me by a friend.

Wurtz. Nonsense, my dear. Never waste time in reading manuscripts—nothing is worth perusal till it arrives at the dignity of print. What would our speeches at the assembly be if they were first seen in manuscript?

Mrs. W. Listen to me, my dear. At the ball that you went to, when you were last here, you observed a young man, who fixed his eyes upon you all the evening—you must recollect him—he made a very great impression upon you.

Helen. O yes, aunt, I do remember—what was his name?

Mrs. W. Frederick Stop.

Helen. True—I recollect the person—Heigho! (*Sighs.*)

Mrs. W. (*Aside to WURTZ.*) Sighs at hearing his name—a sure sign of love.

Wurtz. I think not, my dear—I always sigh when I hear your's.

Mrs. W. Brute!—You danced together. (*To HELEN.*)

Helen. I did not particularly observe him.

Wurtz. Mrs. W. you must not examine the poor girl in such a diplomatic manner—allow me to state the case clearly. Should this young gentleman propose to marry you, my dear, what would you do?

Helen. I should refuse him.

Wurtz. Ha, ha—she votes with my party.

Mrs. W. My dear child, you are very silly.

Wurtz. Silence, my dear—no debate can be allowed after the question is settled by a majority. That young man was your *aunt's* choice—now *I* have one to propose—a man of fortune—of title—in short, Count Mullendorf.

Helen. I must refuse him.

Mrs. W. Of course she prefers my young man.

Wurtz. She prefers the Count. (*Both cross to centre.*)

Helen. Believe me, my dear uncle and aunt, I am interested in —

Mrs. W. { Whom?
Wurtz. }

Helen. Neither the young man nor the count.

Wurtz. Then in whom do you possess an interest?

Helen. In no one—I do not wish to be married.

Mrs. W. Not wish to be married!—the girl's a fool!

Wurtz. Singular being—why these anti-connubial notions?

Helen. You will laugh at me, uncle, when I tell you—but this manuscript, which has been sent to me by a friend, contains so many powerful arguments against matrimony—so many precedents of misery in that state, that I assure you I have no wish at present to encounter its chances and changes—I wish you would read the work.

Wurtz. What is it called?

Helen. “The inconvenience and danger of matrimony.” (*Presenting the manuscript, which WURTZBURG takes from her hand, and throws with contempt upon the table*)

Wurtz. My dear girl, I am sufficiently acquainted with the subject already—no book upon it, however eloquent, can elucidate more than I already know.

Mrs. W. Then be grateful for your knowledge, sir, and appreciate it.

Wurtz. Order, order. My dear niece, you have seen your aunt's choice—

Helen. I have.

Wurtz. But you have not seen mine.

Helen. I have not.

Wurtz. Will you oblige me by giving him your ear?

Helen. My what?

Wurtz. An interview.

Helen. 'Tis useless, uncle—I shall never marry him.

Wurtz. If you dislike the man, believe me, I shall not urge the matter.

Helen. That's a dear uncle.

Mrs. W. She'll not marry your fine Count, believe me—come my love, you must not be influenced by this paltry manuscript; Mr. Stop will soon be here, and a few tender protestations from him will refute all the silly arguments advanced by the silly author of that sillier book. A man to write against the aristocracy of matrimony! the demagogue ought to be decapitated for high treason. [Exit with HELEN R. H.]

Wurtz. I have more trouble in governing my wife than the minister has in ruling the whole cabinet. Ah! here is my friend, the doctor—to-day, he is to introduce me to the count—what the deuce shall I say to him? I was not prepared for the opposition of my niece.

Enter DOCTOR KEPPELCRANCK from the back, leading on ERASMUS.

Wurtz. My dear doctor, I'm glad to see you.

Doctor. (Holding ERASMUS by the hand, as if about to introduce him.)—My friend and I have made all possible haste.—(ERASMUS has discovered the library or book-case at the back; he snatches his hand away from the Doctor's, and is employed in examining the contents of the case.)

Wurtz. Where is your friend?

Doctor. Allow me to introduce him.—(Turns round.)—

where is he?—I held him by the hand by this moment—*(Sees ERASMUS.)*—Ah, there he is amongst the books *(Goes to him.)*
 Count Mullendorf, allow me to present you to your uncle-in-law, Mr. Wurtzburg, whom you have been so impatient to see.
 Rush into his arms.

(Aside to ERASMUS.)

Eras. *(Crossing to Mr. W., but looking at a book which he holds in his hands.)* An old edition of the German Troubadours.—My dear sir, I'm delighted to see you—I'm enchanted.

Wurtz. *(bowing profoundly)* Believe me, count, I am equally happy in possessing your acquaintance. As for my wife, she—

Eras. Is two hundred years old at least.

Wurtz. Sir—my wife—two hundred years old?

Eras. No, no—this book.

Wurtz. Oh!

Eras. I suppose, by your possessing so valuable a relic, that you are bibliopolist—if so, I shall respect you the more.

Wurtz. Your respect, count, I shall always be proud to acknowledge—our friend, the Doctor, has informed me of your wish for an alliance with my niece.

Doctor. *(crosses)* The count is delighted at your acceptance of his proposal, and anxiously awaits the moment in which I am to throw myself at the lady's feet.

Wurtz. You!

Doctor. The lady is to be wooed by proxy.

Wurtz. The count had much better press his suit in *propria personæ*.

Eras. You seem to have a fine collection of books, sir.

Wurtz. I am a member of the Society at Berlin.

Eras. Ah!—Delightful!

Wurtz. *Quorem pars magna fui.*

Eras. Virgil. Give me your hand—you are more than my uncle—you are my brother. Doctor, you're right—marriage will save my life.

Wurtz. *(Goes to a book-case and takes out half a dozen large*

volumes, which he places on the table) Here are some very scarce editions, count.

Eras. Ah!—may I look?

Wurtz. Certainly.

Eras. (examining the books) A fine Terence!—Plautus!—a Petronius! Magnificent! fine taste—fine type—

Wurtz. Printed by Robert Estienne.

Eras. 'Tis the original edition. At page 66 there are two typographical errors.

Wurtz. There are.

Eras. Oh, my uncle, my brother. (*Taking the hands of WURTZBURG with joy.*) Doctor, doctor, you are right—matrimony will save my life.

Wurtz. But when you see my niece, you will exclaim—

Eras. (Taking a large old folio from table) What old work is this?

Wurtz. You will exclaim, as you gaze upon her youthful charms—

Eras. 'Tis what I have longed for these twenty years. (*Regarding the folio.*)

Wurtz. What, sir, my niece?

Eras. No, no—this book.

Wurtz. That—'tis the first edition—

Eras. Of English Shakespeare!—Ha! ha! ah! ah! (*Placing it on the table with care.*)

Doctor. What wretched binding.

Eras. (to the Doctor, with ineffable disdain) 'Goth!—May I touch? (To WURTZBURG.)

Wurtz. Yes, yes.

Eras. (taking up the book) May I open?

Wurtz. Certainly.

Eras. It is Shakespeare!

Wurtz. A genuine copy.

Eras. Indeed. (Opening and gazing on it) Oh, venerable

work! Dull clods that ye are, are you not moved as you behold this ancient type?—as ye behold these grandsire letters—the ancestors of that noble family whose progeny now fills all Europe? Here are the first printed words of the master mind—words from which thousands of copies have been made, and *will* be made, to the end of time. Look, look—gaze on them as I do—in delight—in wonder! (*Turning over the leaves.*) Ariel! Caliban! Hamlet! Lear! Othello! Falstaff!—ah, Falstaff! fat Jack!—Ha! ha! ha! (*Solemnly*)—Macbeth! Cæsar! Brutus!—the noble Romans!—Shylock! Rosalind! Touchstone! Benedick! Beatrice!—Ah! ah! ah!—I'll write a Dictionary, doctor—I will—I'll write a Dictionary—amongst the new words shall be placed Shakespeare, and that word shall signify nature, poetry, and truth. (*Crosses to R. H.*)

Wurtz. As you value the book so much, my friend, it shall be yours. I present it to you as my wedding present.

Eras. Doctor, hold the book. (*The Doctor takes the book from ERASMUS.*) Doctor, you're right—matrimony will save my life. That I should have an uncle with such books—such editions—Oh, I'm a happy man.

Wurtz. You have not yet seen the lady.

Eras. The Doctor will see her—all that I have to do is to marry her.

Wurtz. 'Tis somewhat necessary that the lady should consent to have you.

Eras. I've nothing to do with that—that is the Doctor's business. (*ERASMUS seats himself at the table, absorbed in perusing the folio.*)

Doctor. Let the young lady see my friend the Count, I will answer for the result.

Wurtz. Indeed.

Doctor. All that you have to do is to prepare the contract for signature, and the young lady for her fate: as for myself, I

have a call to make on a patient or two in this neighbourhood, and shall not return until dinner-time.

Wurtz. I cannot leave the Count alone.

Doctor. You don't leave him alone—he is in better company than either you or I can be to him—leave him with your books, and he'll neither care for uncle, aunt, friends, nor bride. Do as I command you, and all will be right. Adieu till dinner. I am going to attend to my patients—you look to yours.

[*Exit the Doctor at the back, WURTZBURG R. H.*

Eras. (*at the table*) This is delightful—that my uncle should be a bibliopolist—a collector! (*In removing the folio, his eyes rest upon his own manuscript, thrown on the table by WURTZBURG*) Eh! what's this?—'tis my own writing! By the bones of Friar Bacon, 'tis my first volume. How came it here?—That fellow Hans has not delivered it to my pupil—a careless lout. (*He turns over the leaves and reads*) Is it possible?—my arguments against marriage are certainly very striking—what's this? (*Reading*) “If we experience such difficulty in securing our own happiness, how greatly must the difficulty be increased by striving to procure it for a dozen perhaps, for who can limit the number of his children?” True. “Continue a bachelor, your life is your own; take a wife, it belongs to your family—then do you not forfeit your independence in marrying?” True again. “If you are a man of letters, you will shrink from the mere details of housekeeping: how could you bear to have an inspired moment annihilated by—‘My dear, what will you have for dinner?’ or the angry voice of your wife scolding the servants—or the screams of children—and they always scream whenever they can—think of your nightly rest being disturbed during the progress of dentition.” True, true. (*Walking about in great agitation*) I did not think I had argued so powerfully—its appalling. (*Reading again*) “Parties! balls! intrigues!”—An intrigue—I'm frightened—I begin to shrink from my fate.

Enter HANS, mysteriously, from the back.

Hans. Master !

Eras. Oh ! (*starting*) Who's there ?

Hans. Your confidential domestic.

Eras. Oh—

Hans. I'm very uneasy in my mind.

Eras. At what ?

Hans. I was reposing in the garden a few minutes since, when two persons came and sat in an arbour near my position—they commenced a conversation—the voice of one was that of your aunt-in-law in perspective—of the other, that of the young man who wanted to hire our apartment this morning —

Eras. Well.

Hans. They talked of one Count Mullendorf; this I knew to be you, though till this morning I was ignorant of the fact —

Eras. Go on.

Hans. I heard the young man say that he loved the lady, that you are to marry, to distraction —

Eras. Indeed !

Hans. And the aunt said that she, the aunt, hated you, and she abused you, said that her niece would never marry you—and the young officer talked about his happiness being destroyed for ever, and became quite suicidal.

Eras. Say no more—I'll renounce it all—I cannot consent to save my own life at the expense of another's happiness—the Doctor must look out for some one else. I'll write to the young man and the aunt, resigning all pretensions to the lady.—(*He sits at the table and writes.*)

Hans. How disinterested.

Eras. (*writing*)—Hans, were you ever married ?

Hans. Once.

Eras. You were, eh ! had your wife a gallant ?

Hans. She'd two.

Eras. How! I must make a note of this for my second volume.

Hans. The sexton and the grave-digger, and I did think she had some thoughts of the undertaker.

Eras. Dreadful! Were I to marry, might not this young man be my wife's sexton, grave-digger, and undertaker in one?

Hans. Decidedly he might.

Eras. Deliver these letters—one to the aunt, the other to the young man. I shall not marry this niece.

Hans. Nor at all if I were you, sir; matrimony is a thorny and a devious path, which if one is once impelled into, one knows not into what ditches and quagmires one may fall; at all events it is a very long lane with only one turning.

[*Exit HANS with the letters.*

Eras. He's right—Hans is right—he must assist me in my second volume. I'll take notes of the hints I have already received from him.—(*Sits at the table and writes, with his back to the R. H.*

HELEN enters R. H.; she starts back on seeing ERASMUS.

Helen. Who's this? it must be the man they wish me to marry; my uncle said he was here—he's writing—surely that form is familiar to me—it is, as I live, its my master, Mr. Bookwurm; he cannot be my intended husband. No, no, 'tis a count that I am to marry. The Doctor has brought Mr. B. here, no doubt. I'll speak to him.—(*HELEN advances gently to him, and taps him on the shoulder.*)

Eras. Eh! ha! what? Helen, you here—you—what, are you—are you the—Eh! eh!

Helen. This is my uncle's house.

Eras. (*Taking her hand.*)—My dear, dear pupil.

Helen. How glad I am to see you; you have just arrived in

time to assist me with your friendly counsel. I told you this morning that I was going to be married.

Eras. You did.

Helen. I have since made up my mind not to marry.

Eras. Ha! *you have read* my book—good girl—good girl.

Helen. Besides, I could never love the man that they wish me to marry; my aunt says that he is the most disagreeable uncouth creature that ever breathed.

Eras. If you can't love him, don't have him.

Helen. He is rich.

Eras. But don't have him.

Helen. And though he has a title —

Eras. Don't have him.

Helen. And is called Count Mullendorf.

Eras. Eh!—(*Starting but checking himself.*)—Count Mullendorf is he?

Helen. Do you know him?

Eras. Yes, yes—do you?

Helen. I do not.

Eras. And you hate the poor count without knowing him?

Helen. I may not hate him, but I do not want to marry him; especially since I have read your book.

Eras. True, true—but an author can, if he pleases, suddenly turn round, and as strongly argue in favour of that, which he may have previously contended as strongly against.

Helen. Then where are we to find truth?

Eras. You sigh—I'm quite as much worried as you are—they want to marry *me*.

Helen. Surely you will not consent.

Eras. I don't know—a thought has suddenly struck me that though marriage has its *bad* side, it also has its *good* side—so that he who argues against it is not wrong, and he who contends for it is as decidedly right.

Helen. It may be the foundation of all blessings.

Eras. Or the source of all evils.

Helen. Then we should make our choice carefully.

Eras. True—what would you advise me to do ?

Helen. I cannot advise you—I can but picture the wife that I think would make you happy.

Eras. Sketch her—by all means sketch her.

Helen. She should be gentle, pretty, not *too* learned, for you men are very jealous of your advantages, though she must possess sufficient knowledge to make her comprehend and admire your talent.

Eras. True.

Helen. She must not trouble you with vapid details of her housekeeping.

Eras. True.

Helen. And one who, without wishing to follow you into the high regions of science, can be interested in your pursuits, anxiously watch for your success, and delightedly share in your glory.

Eras. I should love her—I should love her.

Helen. In a word, one who well knowing the goodness of your heart, would care little for the singularity of your manners, would love you, and strive daily to be all that you wish.

Eras. I should doat upon her—I should live but in her presence—but where is she to be found ? such a woman is not in the wide world.

Helen. There is one.

Eras. Where ?—

Helen. She is intended for the Count Mullendorf.

Eras. Ha ! then know my dearest pupil—my—(*aside*)—I'll tell her all and fold her to my heart.—(*He turns with open arms towards HELEN ; when FREDERICK joyfully enters, and is received in the embraces of ERASMUS.*)

Eras. Who's this ? what's this ?

Fred. My friend—my best friend—how shall I thank you ?

Eras. For what, sir? for what?

Fred. For your kind letter.

Eras. Bless me—*(aside)*—I have resigned her—Hush—
(crosses to HELEN)—I must talk to you, Helen, my dear; go
to your uncle—he will explain all—in the mean time tell him
to get the marriage contract ready.

Helen. A contract for what?

Fred. Dear madam—I am indebted to that gentleman for
all my happiness—I was going to fight him, but he has proved
my best friend.

Helen. What does it mean?

Eras. Go to your uncle.

Helen. Tell me, sir.

Fred. Go to your aunt.

Eras. *(Aside.)*—Go to your uncle.

Fred. To your aunt.

Eras. Adieu.

Fred. Adieu, dearest.

Helen. *(Rushing off R. H.)*—I'm bewildered.

Fred. How shall I ever return this kindness—to think you
should resign her to me.

Eras. *(confused.)*—My dear, sir—I—I—

Fred. Had I not received your letter, signed by your own
hand, I could not have believed it.

Eras. My dear friend, when I wrote that letter to you, I had
not seen the lady.

Fred. But that is of little consequence.

Eras. I beg leave to differ—and to end all disputes, young
man, you can't have that lady—she loves me—me.

Fred. You!

Eras. I have received the declaration from her own lips—
now let me appeal to your own generosity: you are young,
well-looking, and a soldier—I am odd, angular, and ordinary
—you will every day find dozens of women to love you—I

may live a thousand years and never again discover one with the slightest affection for me—therefore, pray release me from my promise.

Fred. Nay, sir, I cannot.

Eras. I marry, sir, by order of my doctor—my life, my reason demands it.

Fred. I love the lady, sir, and will not resign her.

Eras. I can but echo your words, sir.

Fred. Then we *must* fight, sir.

Eras. I won't—I will not resign Helen, because it is opposing our mutual happiness; and I won't fight, because it is against my principles.

Fred. Then, sir, I will brand you as a coward—I shall never hear your name in society, but I shall speak of you with contempt—nay, I will go further, I will declare to the world that every man of learning, every scholar, nay, the whole university, are curs and cowards—they *may* read, but they won't fight.

Eras. Young man, dare you insult the university? dare you insult the whole mass of intellect? This is beyond endurance.

Fred. Then, sir, name your weapon.

Eras. What you please.

Fred. Pistols.

Eras. Yes—there is merely a trigger to pull.

Fred. In half an hour, by the river side.

Eras. I shall be there.

Fred. Your second?

Eras. My doctor.

Fred. You're very prudent.

Eras. Now, sir—leave the house—I shall be there.

Fred. And I shall be there, sir. [Exit FREDERICK at back.

Eras. To attack the university—insult the whole body—my blood rushes to my heart—it boils in my veins—I feel as im-

petuous as when I was eighteen! The Doctor was right—I wanted excitement—I now have it. A marriage and a duel—and I will fight, *pro aris et focis*, for the learned, for my wife, for my children. But stop—I've no children yet—and, if I am killed, I shall have no wife—and my great work will be unfinished. But, courage—I must not have such thoughts. I'll sit down calmly, make my will, and put my worldly affairs in order. (*He sits at the table and writes.*)

Enter HANS at back.

Hans. I have delivered your two letters, sir—that to the young officer I gave with my own hands.

Eras. (*writing*) I know it.

Hans. Mrs. Wurtzburg had gone out to walk, but her letter will be delivered most punctually as soon as she returns from locomotion.

Eras. (*writing*) Very well.

Hans. Allow me to inform you, sir, that the culinary arrangements of the kitchen are in a state of forwardness, and that dinner will be on table at five o'clock.

Eras. I shall first take a turn by the river side.

Hans. Do, sir—it will promote your carnivorousness.

Eras. Get me some pistols.

Hans. Pistols!

Eras. Pistols.

Hans. To walk with!

Eras. Get them.

Hans. Where shall I find them, sir?

Eras. I saw some in the counsellor's gallery.

Hans. Wonderful man!—He's now going to begin some dissertation on ancient fire-arms and engines of destruction.

[*Exit HANS R. H.*

Eras. (*folding a sheet of paper*) I will leave this on the table, directed to Helen—then, should I fall, I shall die in peace.

Re-enter HANS, with two enormous pistols.

Hans. Here are two famous ones, sir.

Eras. (*rising and taking the pistols*) 'Tis well. (*Puts them in his pocket*) When the Doctor comes, tell him I want him by the water side.

Hans. Yes, sir. You'll have plenty of time for your walk; 'tis but four now.

Eras. Then I'll take some books to amuse me—what are these? (*Taking up books*) "The campaigns of Gustavus Adolphus"—The very thing. (*HANS brings forward several books from the case—ERASMUS takes them up, opens, reads them, and puts them in his pockets*) "The Wars of the Hussites and the Anabaptists"—very good—"The Siege of Jerusalem"—excellent—"The origin of Fire-arms"—highly necessary—"a dissertation on Duelling"—indispensible! *Hans*, remain you here, and send the Doctor to me the moment he arrives. Now to revenge this insult on the learned.

[*Exit at the back, loaded with books.*

Hans. Master certainly looks like a walking book-case.

HELEN and Mr. WURTZBURG enter R. H.

Helen. What do you tell me, uncle? Mr. Erasimus is the count.

Wurtz. He is. Do you now consent to marry him?

Helen. Yes, uncle, I do.

Wurtz. Excellent girl. (*Seeing HANS.*) Where is your master?

Hans. Gone to peregrinate.

Wurtz. Where?

Hans. By the margin of the translucent water.

Wurtz. By his request, I have prepared the contract—when will he return?

Hans. At the usual hour of mastication.

Wurtz. I but require his signature, and then all will be settled.

Hans. Shall I take the paper to him, sir. After he has perused all the books he has carried with him, that document may amuse him, if he is not too much absorbed in his pistols.

Helen. Pistols!

Hans. Yes—he's preparing an argumentation on heterogeneous combustibles.

Wurtz. Take him this, sir (*giving HANS the contract*)—and tell him to peruse it carefully.

Hans. Your commands shall be most explicitly and most indubitably obeyed. [Exit c. door.

Wurtz. My dear niece, your ready acquiescence delights me. The wealth of the Count will not only enable you to live in splendour, but enhance my influence with the minister.

Helen. Oh, sir, 'tis not his wealth I heed; 'tis his kind heart—his noble qualities—

Wurtz. Which are all very well to possess, in addition to fortune. Now, had you married my wife's protégé—that miserably poor Mr. Stop—

Enter Mrs. WURTZBURG, with an open letter in her hand, from the back, followed by FREDERICK and the Doctor.

Mrs. W. Mr. W.—Mr. W.—my point is carried. I have just received a letter from the count, in which he states, that events have occurred at the last moment that induce him to forego all claims to my niece's hand.

Helen. Resigns me?

Wurtz. Nonsense, Mrs. W.

Fred. Events at the last moment! (*Aside to Mrs. W.*) The scholar is frightened—he won't fight.

Doctor. What!—breaks off the match after all the trouble I have taken—foolish man—now he'll die—I'll give him over.

Helen. (aside.) Then I am indeed unhappy!

Doctor. But where is my patient? Let him explain—let him speak—where is he?

Wurtz. Gone to peregrinate, by the river's margin, with pistols and books.

Fred. Pistols!—then he is waiting for me—I must hasten to him—follow me, Doctor.

Doctor. Why, sir?

Fred. I am going to fight the Count—I insulted him—he named you as his second.

Doctor. (*crosses to Fred.*) I beg to be excused—my duty is to preserve his life, not to assist in depriving him of it. And you, sir—can you—dare you become his assassin!—you, to whom he has behaved so nobly.

Fred. Nobly!

Doctor. Yes, sir. The Count never trumpets *his* benefactions to the world, but conceals being the author of good actions even from those on whom he bestows them. You are worth ten thousand florins.

Fred. I am, sir.

Doctor. You received them from your late father's lawyer.

Fred. I did, sir.

Doctor. The Count sent them to you—you are the son of his old Latin master—he heard that you were left unprovided for, and in secret he befriended you. Can you *now* murder your benefactor?

Fred. How can I return his kindness?—how can I acknowledge—

Doctor. Fly to him—fall upon your knees, and ask the good man's pardon. (*HANS appears at the back, pale and affrighted.* He comes down L. H. C., carrying a hat, pistols, and books.)

Hans. O my poor master—my poor master.

Doctor. He's drowned.

All. Drowned!

Hans. In a paroxysm of despair, he has precipitated himself into the aquary.

Helen. Good heavens! (*She is falling, but is sustained by Mrs. WURTZBURG.*)

Doctor. Be calm—'tis not possible.

Hans. It is possible, because it is a fact. I went to seek him—I saw a group of people speaking of a man who had fallen into the water—I approached—what did I see?—My master's hat—these pistols and books.

Wurtz. (*at the table*) What is this?—a paper directed to my niece.

Helen. (*taking it*) For me! it is his writing. (*Opens it with great agitation*) Oh 'tis too true—he is no more—this is his will—I cannot read. (*She drops the paper—falls on the shoulder of Mrs. WURTZBURG. The Doctor takes it up and reads*)

Doctor. "I bequeath to my beloved Helen all I possess, except forty thousand florins, which I give the man who has urged me to this extremity, in token of my forgiveness."

All. Dear, excellent creature—good man.

Hans. Worthy *Homo.* (*HELEN is supported by Mrs. WURTZBURG, with her face to the back of the stage—she utters a shriek—the group separate, and discover ERASMUS at the back, buttoned to the throat in a morning-gown, and attentively reading a book. The Doctor runs toward him, and drags him forward.*)

Hans. Master.

Helen. My friend.

Wurtz. My nephew.

Fred. (*on his knee*) My benefactor.

Doctor. (*embracing him*) My patient?

Eras. (*coolly*) What's the matter? what has happened?

Helen. We heard that you were drowned.

Eras. But I am not. Absorbed in meditation, I suddenly found myself in the river, but, Leander like, I swam to the opposite side—no one saw me—I gained your house by the garden—borrowed your morning-gown, and here I am. (*Seeing FREDERICK*) Young sir, you are not a man of honour—you have kept me waiting. Come, sir, I'll forth again—your insolence must and shall be chastised.

Fred. Oh, sir, forgive me—I knew not that you were my secret friend—I apologize for all that I have uttered—and, as I see that Helen really loves you, I resign all pretensions to her, and throw myself on your kind and generous feeling.

Eras. (*to Mrs. WURTZBURG*) Madam, have I conquered your dislike to me?

Mrs. W. Oh yes, sir—your generosity has subdued me.

Eras. And you, my Helen—my pupil—do you still detest this Count Mullendorf?

Helen. My dear friend and master, you already know *my* thoughts.

Doctor. Huzza—my patient's life is saved.

Eras. Yes, Doctor, thanks to your prescription. (*Taking the hand of HELEN.*)

Hans. Master's a perfect anomalous paradox.

Eras. And now, in the teeth of his great work, Erasmus Bookwurm commences his journey on the new and strange road of matrimony.—(*To the audience*) And if you will cheer me at this, the commencement of my perilous route, 'twill give me courage to support the many dangers I *may* encounter; but *should* they be few—should my gentle wife make my married state one of happiness and confidence, and thus nobly refute my arguments, then, in the words of Shakespeare, I will promise that

“Deeper than did plummet ever sound
I'll drown my book.”

THE END.





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